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44- CWU

9 March 1949

SUBJECT: General - Operational
Specific - Anti-Stakhanovite Campaign

TO: FIELD "DONKEY"

Attn: ☐ ☐

ENCLOSURE: (a) Clipping from New York Times Magazine of 6 March 1949

1. I am forwarding Enclosure (a) not as material for direct operational use but as an example of a trend which we have observed here and which we feel warrants field exploitation. You will note that by American standards the material contained in Enclosure (a) is sadly lacking in humor. I feel however that it gives us a definite lead for future activities.

2. The fact seems to be that the Russians are caught in one of those contradictions which they so delight in attributing to others. On the one hand they feel impelled to increase the productivity of the laboring force in the Soviet Union and the Satellites in order to assure sufficient capital accumulation for the productive needs of their economic and security establishment, while on the other hand they find themselves unable - due to inefficiency and economic waste in the form of a top-heavy bureaucratic and security structure - to provide a flow of consumers goods to the laboring population sufficient to serve as an incentive for intensified effort. Since their technological base is severely limited in scope they cannot depend on advances in productive technique as a means of securing greater per capita productivity; and since a "Socialist" state cannot tell its people to "work harder or else" as early capitalism did, the Soviets are forced to resort to two basic psychological appeals: (1) the future "proletarian paradise" (the "carrot before the donkey"); and (2) emulation and competition. Both of these are rather unsatisfactory for the purpose. The Kremlin is not stressing the former now, probably for fear that the "donkey" will get tired of chasing the unattainable "carrot". Moreover, being very keen analysts of human behavior and motivation, they are undoubtedly aware that in resorting to the second appeal they are asking their underlying population to honor and emulate the "scab", a symbol which is universally and thoroughly detested by any proletariat. Their frantic efforts to beat the propaganda drums on this subject serve as a good indication of the weakness they feel and should provide our cue for taking action.

3. Specifically, we feel that a skillfully-conducted campaign of ridicule against Stakhanovism and Stakhanovites in all areas might not only spike the Soviet propaganda guns on this subject, but might even

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turn them on the gunners to the point of securing actual decreases in productivity through passive sabotage. In addition to the manufacture and dissemination of jokes of the type evidenced in Enclosure (a), such a campaign would also include the publication of derisive posters and slogans. These should identify the Stakhanovite with some clearly recognizable derogatory symbol. Since every Satellite will have its own Stakhanov or Henneke, the campaign should be keyed both to the personality involved and to the vernacular of the area. Thus, for example, if such a campaign were to be pursued in the United States the symbol employed in the posters, stickers, chalk campaigns, etc., would probably be that of the "eager beaver". The two prominent front teeth of the beaver could then easily become a symbol of the reprehensible "scab" Stakhanovite and could be clandestinely pasted or chalked on his tools, his car, his house-door, etc. until it became established that any attempt to exceed one's quota would carry with it the sanction of the organized scorn of the working community.

4. The campaign which we are proposing lends itself to endless refinements and variations. These must be worked out in the field on the basis of a close knowledge and observance of popular attitudes and reactions. Moreover I am aware of your present limitations and do not want you to undertake such a project at the expense of other activities. I would merely like you to give me your reactions to this proposal for possible future use when your facilities permit. It also occurs to me that [] might play around with the ideas in paragraph 2 above, with a view toward composing a treatise on this subject to tie in with his series aimed at defecting intellectuals from the Soviet version of "scientific" Marxism.

MO/hbe

cc: OPC File (2) ✓
OPC Chrono
EDUCATOR Dispatch

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